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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3257
INFO RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5513
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3233
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3098
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3756
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1076
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3775
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SCUL PGOV TX
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BERDIMUHAMEDOV REVIVED CIRCUS

¶1. During the July 31 Cabinet of Ministers meeting, President Berdimuhamedov signed a decree authorizing the re-establishment of the national circus. The decree lifted his predecessor's seven-year long ban on circus performances which, along with opera and ballet, were considered "uncongenial" art forms for Turkmen culture. According to the decree, the Ministry of Culture, TV and Radio Broadcasting will supervise the circus. Earlier in January of this year, the Ministry of Culture signed a contract with the Turkish Efor Company to reconstruct the old circus building, which during Niyazov's ban was used as a cultural center. The National Institute of Culture will train professional entertainers and circus artists.

¶2. Berdimuhamedov called for the development of national equestrian circus performances, which were very popular in 1960s. The older generation of Turkmen recall the Brothers Annayev equestrian circus troupe, which gained a great deal of artistic recognition not only within the Soviet Union, but also internationally. Referring to the success of the Brothers Annayev, Berdimuhamedov said that "this popular kind of art has good traditions in Turkmenistan." The presidential decree ordered that the State Horse Association organize shows for the circus on a paid basis.

¶3. COMMENT: The Turkmen public seems to have welcomed the president's decree to re-establish the national circus. However, the development of genuine art requires freedom for creativity. Without allowing this additional condition, the decree will only produce a cosmetic change. END COMMENT.

MILES